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January 31, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
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From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

FOURTH STATUS REPORT ON THE CHILD CARE POLICY FRAMEWORK

On March 29, 2011, the Board adopted the updated Child Care Policy Framework and a series of related recommendations. As a part of that action, the Office of Child Care, within the Service Integration Branch of the Chief Executive Office, was directed to provide status reports in July and January of each year through 2013. This is the fourth status report on the implementation of the Child Care Policy Framework, covering the period of July 1 through December 31, 2012, and is organized by the goals of the Child Care Policy Framework.

Goal 1. The quality of child development services in Los Angeles County will be improved as the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) is expanded and support services to STEP participants are intensified.

STEP is a child care quality rating and support system developed by the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) and administered by the Office of Child Care. The pilot phase of STEP was funded primarily by First 5 LA, from August 2008 through November 2011. As of December 2011, STEP has been funded by Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) as a project of the Early Childhood Workforce Consortium.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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The following are highlights of STEP accomplishments for this reporting period:

- In September, 26 programs were referred to our partner, the UCLA-Center for Improving Child Care Quality, for reviews;
- Quality Improvement Grant requests are being processed for 30 STEP programs;
- 16 quality improvement trainings were conducted involving 129 STEP participants; and
- As a part of its expansion effort, STEP initiated the recruitment of family child care homes and child care centers in Boyle Heights, Watts/Willowbrook, San Fernando, Torrance and Lancaster. A sample recruitment brochure is attached.
- In December 2012, STEP launched three innovative services:
 1. STEP Renewal: Family child care providers who were early participants in the STEP pilot phase were encouraged to renew their ratings and informed of incentives to continue their participation in STEP;
 2. STEP Peer Advisor and Leader: Family child care providers who earned STEP ratings of three or higher were invited to become Peer Advisors and mentor other family child care providers. Programs rated at STEP, three have demonstrated substantially higher staff qualifications, developmentally appropriate learning environments, and understanding of and connection to community resources; and
 3. Sid the Science Kid: STEP is collaborating with the UCLA Early Care and Education Program on a Boeing funded project to implement *Sid the Science Kid* curriculum in family child care homes. STEP family child care providers in Inglewood were invited to participate in this unique training opportunity. Various studies of early care and education programs have cited weaknesses in the area of "instructional support." This project offers family child care providers access to a curriculum and the opportunity to develop their understanding of foundational math and science concepts.

As a result of our experience with STEP, the Office of Child Care was invited to participate in the California Department of Education's (CDE) application to Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELCG). This application was designed to support local child care rating and improvement efforts already underway in 16 counties. Los Angeles County was the only jurisdiction with two participants, STEP and LAUP.

CDE was notified that their application was successful in December 2011. Planning activities with CDE and the 15 other counties began in early 2012 and on October 30, 2012, the Board of Supervisors accepted a multi-year contract to implement the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant in Los Angeles County. This project will run through December 2015, and the total funding for this project is \$5,149,500. LAUP will be operating a similar contract. Services developed under RTT-ELCG are intended to target at-risk children, including those who are low-income, infants and toddlers, at risk of abuse and/or neglect, and dual language learners.

During the months of November and December, the Office of Child Care finalized agreements with:

- UCLA – Center for Improving Child Care Quality to conduct program ratings;
- Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles to provide coaching services to STEP participants; and
- Project Outreach Consultant to assist in recruiting family child care homes and child care centers to participate in RTT-ELCG.

An RTT-ELCG component has been added to the Office of Child Care web page and agreements with a number of partners have jump-started recruitment efforts. This project is committed to serving 175 programs by providing technical assistance and on-site coaching; quality improvement grants; and multiple program ratings. Volunteers of America-Los Angeles and California Children's Academy have committed 40 and 10 child development centers respectively to participate in RTT-ELCG. Both of these organizations have child development programs located throughout Los Angeles County. As a result of a partnership with the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF), at least 15 family child providers, involved in MAOF networks will be participating in RTT-ELCG. These family child care homes are located in Hawaiian Gardens, Norwalk, Gardena, El Monte, and South El Monte. And finally, the Office of Child Care is working with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to identify early care and education programs serving DCFS children in the Vermont Corridor.

Goal 2. Local, State and Federal policies and budgets will strengthen the child development infrastructure and support the expansion of high quality child development services that integrate family support, health, mental health and other relevant services into their operations.

With the implementation of the 2012-13 California State budget, Los Angeles County has experienced reductions in State Preschool Programs, Alternative Payment Programs, and General Child Care. In addition, State Preschool Programs, the majority of which provide part-day school readiness services for low-income children between three and five years of age, are now required to assess and collect parent fees. CDE will be reporting to the Legislature on the number of children statewide who lose access to these services as a result of non-payment of family fees. As that information becomes available, the Office of Child Care will engage in a review to determine the impact on children and families in Los Angeles County.

In addition, the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and the Child Care Planning Committee contributed to the County's State and Federal legislative platforms.

Recognizing the increasingly important role of federal resources to the early care and education sector, the Roundtable devoted a portion of its December meeting to the Federal Budget process, including the implications of sequestration for early care and education. Both Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant continue to be at risk for substantial cuts. Materials were prepared on these issues and are available on the Office of Child Care's website.

Goal 3. County departments will work collaboratively with each other and community partners to maximize the utilization of available resources, support quality improvements and promote the delivery of integrated services for children and their families. Particular emphasis will be placed on connecting the following populations to child development resources and when appropriate, early intervention services:

- CalWORKs families who are homeless and have young children;
- Children under the supervision of DCFS and the Probation Department, including those in foster care, kin care and with their families; and
- Teen parents under the jurisdiction of DCFS and/or the Probation Department.

In response to a request from the Office of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the Roundtable devoted a portion of its November 14, 2012 meeting agenda to providing input on the City of Los Angeles Consolidated Plan. This plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for how the City will invest in low income neighborhoods and build sustainable communities over the next five years, using four grants Federal Housing and Urban Development grants, including:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG);
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME);

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG); and
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Grant (HOPWA).

In developing this plan, City representatives engaged a range of community members and organizations in dialogue to identify housing and community development priorities.

The Roundtable is also working with the CEO Homeless Coordinator regarding implementation of the Family Solution Centers and strategies to connect Family Solution Center clients to early care and education services.

Goal 4. County departments will work collaboratively with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, key school districts and community-based child development services to integrate services, thereby supporting effective:

- Articulation between child development and kindergarten;
- Design of developmentally appropriate transitional kindergarten programs; and
- Identification and utilization of new or nontraditional funding.

Transitional Kindergarten in Los Angeles County

The December 2012 Roundtable meeting provided a forum for a multi-faceted presentation on Transitional Kindergarten (TK). Speakers addressed the following issues:

- Ms. Araceli Sandoval, with Preschool California, provided an overview of TK including SB 1381 and its intent. As a result of SB 1381, children entering kindergarten in 2014-15 will be required to be five years of age by September 1, 2014. TK, the first year of a two-year kindergarten program, is intended to provide "young kindergarteners with the gift of time," through a developmentally appropriate program that bridges the early care and education and K-12 systems;
- Ms. Yvette Streeter and Ms. Kristina Damon with the Long Beach Unified School District described their experience in moving from the Preppy Kindergarten pilot in 2007 involving one classroom, to a district wide system of 26 transitional kindergarten classrooms located at 26 elementary schools throughout the District;

- Ms. Maureen Diekmann, with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), discussed the LAUSD experience with TK which now serves 3,400 children; and
- Ms. Judith Sanchez, with Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), addressed the support services which LACOE provides to school districts as they design and implement TK.

New and Nontraditional Funding Opportunities

The Roundtable continues to monitor planning for an Educare program in Los Angeles County. The first Educare program was established in Chicago in 2000. Using a public-private partnership model, Educare programs are research based; serve children from birth through five years of age; provide services full-day, full-year; utilize small class sizes and highly qualified staff; and offer comprehensive services for children and their families. Currently the Educare Network includes 17 programs throughout the United States. The first Educare program in California is in development in San Jose.

At the November 2012 Roundtable meeting, Ms. Sonia Campos-Rivera with the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce updated the Roundtable on local Educare planning efforts. She reported that the Montebello, Pasadena, Lynwood, and Long Beach School districts are interested in hosting an Educare program. Other Educare programs have relied heavily on Head Start funding. Unfortunately, Head Start funding decisions which were expected to be announced by January 2013 have been delayed to Spring 2013. As a result, the announcement of a local Educare program host will also be delayed.

Currently, the goal is to establish a single Educare program in Los Angeles County. The comprehensive nature of Educare services substantially increases the per child costs, making broad scale replication unlikely. However, the opportunity to establish such a program could inform our understanding of program impacts and contribute to the replication of services with the potential for significant and positive outcomes.

Goal 5. The Chief Executive Office (CEO) will facilitate County department efforts to work internally, across departments and with community partners, to integrate the Strengthening Families Approach (SFA) and Protective Factors into their work with children, families, and communities; and engage families in high quality child development services. The CEO, with assistance from the Center for the Study of Social Policy and key local partners, will establish a multidisciplinary SFA learning community designed to support ongoing professional development and SFA projects that are underway or emerging in County departments.

Ten County departments are participating in the Los Angeles County Strengthening Families Learning Community. While Learning Community members continue to explore, test and learn how the five Protective Factors can be integrated into their work for the purpose of supporting families, there is considerable interest in how to connect the Learning Community and its members, to other Strengthening Families efforts underway in the community. Rather than duplicating or fragmenting efforts, the Learning Community is committed to enhancing and deepening efforts to integrate protective factors into community and County services.

As a part of that process, members of the Strengthening Families Learning Community collaborated on the development of a proposal to the Federal Administration of Children, Youth and Families in June 2012. We were recently informed that proposal was not accepted for funding, however, a local foundation is interested in supporting the project.

Plans are underway to engage the Strengthening Families Learning Community in the development and implementation of the family engagement component of the RTT-ELCG program rating rubric.

Conclusion

The economic outlook appears to be improving and Governor Brown's proposed budget for 2013-14 is noteworthy for more than cuts. In fact, the Governor is proposing to reinvest in education. Unfortunately, that reinvestment does not extend to the early care and education sector. Research from economics, neuroscience, and education has demonstrated the cost effectiveness of programs which support the healthy development of young children over programs aimed at remediation in elementary and high school. This reality will inform our work going forward.

Should your staff have questions regarding this report, they can contact Trish Ploehn at (213) 974-4532 or via e-mail at TPloehn@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:AJ:TP
LB:KMS:km

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Policy Roundtable for Child Care

How can I participate in the RTT-ELC Pilot?

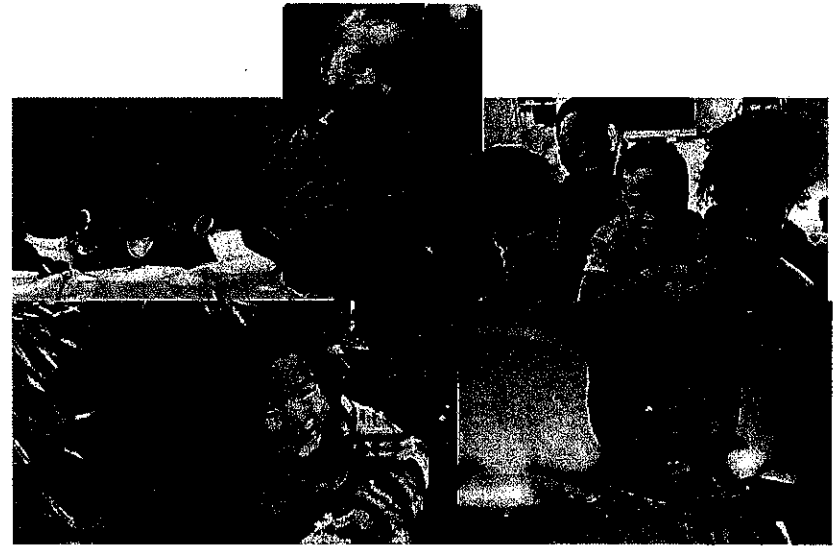
Please go to the Office of Child Care website (www.childcare.lacounty.gov) to download a RTT-ELC Pilot application packet. To request an application via mail, call the Office of Child Care at (213) 974-1188.

Who Developed RTT-ELC Pilot?

California recently received a highly competitive Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) federal grant to improve the quality of early learning programs and close the achievement gap for vulnerable young children. Over the next three years, California, led by local efforts in 16 counties in collaboration with the California Department of Education, will work together to ensure positive outcomes for the state's infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Where can I get more information?

Please contact the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care at (213) 974-4103 or on the Web at www.childcare.lacounty.gov.



RTT-ELC Pilot

A Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System



Information Brochure

222 South Hill Street, 5th Floor Los Angeles, California 90012
Office: (213) 974-4103 www.childcare.lacounty.gov

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What is the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Pilot ?

RTT-ELC is a new child care quality rating and improvement system being piloted in Los Angeles County. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) is a federally funded pilot program that will improve the quality of licensed child care programs. RTT-ELC's goal is to close the achievement gap for young children ages birth to five who are **"high needs"** (e.g. low-income, dual language learners (DLL), have special needs or are under the supervision of child protective services).

What will RTT-ELC do in Los Angeles County?

The Los Angeles County Office of Child Care will use RTT-ELC funds to improve the quality of licensed family child care homes and center-based programs serving high need children. Our goal is to serve up to 175 child care programs by providing quality rating assessments, quality improvement training, coaching and financial incentives.

The end goal of California's RTT-ELC effort is that young children, participate those who are low-income, dual language learners (DLL), or children with disabilities or developmental delays have access to high quality early learning programs so that they thrive in their early learning settings and succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

Who can participate in the RTT-ELC Pilot?

Licensed family child care homes and child development centers that are serving **high needs children** ages birth to five may volunteer to participate in our RTT-ELC Pilot program. Eligible programs must have a child care license for at least 12 months and must meet the RTT-ELC Pilot's licensing standards. At this time, child care programs participating in the Steps to Excellence Program (STEP) or funded by the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) are not eligible to participate in the RTT-ELC Pilot.

How can the RTT-ELC Pilot benefit my child care program?

Child care programs that choose to participate in our RTT-ELC pilot program will be eligible to receive:

- Grants to help you improve your child care program
- 2 free quality assessments of your child care program (a service valued at \$2,000 per visit)
- Coaching and support to help you improve the quality of your child care program (a service valued at \$2,300 per year)
- Opportunities to meet and network with child care providers

Our RTT-ELC funding will expire December 31, 2015. Therefore, our services will be offered up until that date.

How will the RTT-ELC Pilot rate Child Care quality?

The RTT-ELC Pilot examines three core areas of a child care program's operation. These areas are:



Core I –Child Development and School Readiness



Core II –Teachers and Teaching



Core III –Program and Environment

Each participating program will receive a quality rating score after completing an on-site observation. Results will be shared with program staff and promoted on the Office of Child Care's website.